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MAINE NOW TIMES

FEBRUARY 1987

STATE COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

by Beth Edmonds, Maine NOW State Coordinator

Greetings to you all at the beginning of this fine new year. As always we have before us all kinds of challenges and new directions. Before going on to the new year, however, I would like to talk some about the past year and its progress. Nationally, we had many victories. All four anti-abortion ballot measures went down to defeat in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Oregon and Arkansas, despite heavy and expensive campaigning by the opposition. Even though it lost, the ERA race in Vermont was a much closer one than here in Maine in 1984. We are inching our way forward. And in the words of the United Mine Workers, "Step by step the longest march will be won." Women were elected in some historic firsts. Barbara Mikulski became the first Democratic woman to be elected to the United States Senate in her own right. And Kay Orr was the first Republican woman to be elected a Governor (in Nebraska, where her Democratic opponent also was a woman). In 1984 only 19 women ran for statewide office; this year 60 women ran for statewide office and more than half (35) of them won. (Editor's note: Good old liberal Massachusetts elected its first, repeat, first woman to statewide office - Evelyn Murphy, Lieutenant Governor.) While the actual increase of women elected to state legislative seats was incremental, in at least three states -- Ohio, Connecticut and West Virginia -- former state NOW presidents were elected state senators. Other NOW activists and former state officers were elected to House seats in several states, our own Margaret Pruitt Clark (Maine NOW State Coordinator from 1984 to 1986) being one!!! Marge, we are immensely proud of you.

Closer to home, Maine NOW endorsed many candidates and their successes and failures are being reported to you here. There has been much discussion about the Maine NOW endorsement of Sherry Huber for governor. When deciding where we will put our support we consider three options, endorsing one or another of the candidates or endorsing none of them. Each decision makes its own statement. NOW is a non-partisan organization. Our support for a candidate is based on how well they can support and will work for our issues. In this case we were very aware of the impact that not endorsing the Democratic candidate might have, however, it was also clear that Sherry Huber was the only candidate who both supported the range of our issues and would work for them. This time it seemed correct to put our support behind the best person instead of choosing the lesser of two evils. Some of you have disagreed with this decision. I applaud your freedom to do so and I encourage you to join in the Maine NOW PAC's process in an active way before the next election.

There is looming on the horizon a referendum regarding parental consent for minors seeking abortion that may be on the ballot 1988. This will be a crucial battle and will require the hard work of all of us. While most people are pro-choice, the question of requiring parental consent is a confusing one. You should know that, of course, this requirement will not provide better family communication as its proponents insist, but rather will force a young woman in an already difficult situation to prove to a judge that she really wants to do what she has already decided to do - have an abortion. This is another attempt by the right wing to limit and eliminate the right to choose an abortion, a right that is so vital to our freedom as women.

Chapters are doing well in Maine NOW where there are energetic leaders. Training leaders among our ranks is one goal that I am very excited about. If you are in a chapter where things have become dormant, please call me and I will arrange for you and your fellow members to have some assistance in becoming revitalized. Let me hear from you. Tell me what issues you would like NOW to take on in your area. Together we can work to get things moving again.

One final note: In March of 1986, NEWSWEEK published a Gallup Poll on how American women regarded women's rights. 56% of all women consider themselves feminists; only 4% considered themselves anti-feminist. 71% of all women -- 88% of women 18-29 years old -- believe that the women's movement has improved their lives. We are making a difference. We continue to make a difference. Thank you for all your good work.

REPORTS FROM CHAPTERS ACROSS THE STATE

MidCoast NOW

Maine NOW'S NEWEST chapter is now a year old. Recent meetings have included our annual pot luck supper in October and a well attended session on aging led by Lucie Bauer, Sadhbh Neilan, and Peggy Haynes. In honor of the new legislative session, Midcoast NOW and Midcoast League of Women Voters are co-sponsoring a Forum on Effective Lobbying with the Knox County Legislative Delegation to be held early February. Further into February (the short month that lasts so long), we have scheduled a goal setting/planning meeting and another Pot Luck with honored guest Beth Edmonds, Maine NOW State Coordinator.

Brunswick Area NOW

The Brunswick Area chapter has been very active this fall. After organizing the State Conference, we plunged directly into plans for a Take Back the Night march and rally to protest violence against both women and gays. Bowdoin College students, inspired by the conference and Ellie Smeal, initiated the idea and co-organized the march. Their energy and commitment was great! The event was very successful, attracting 120 marchers on a very cold November night and getting good media coverage. At the same time we were working hard to get Marge Clark elected (phoning, canvassing, driving, leafletting, etc.). This was also successful! Right now we are working on a pro-choice signature ad for our local paper, the Brunswick Times-Record. The ad will have appeared on January 22, the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Both the march and the ad are new types of actions for this chapter.

At our regular meetings we have had: in October, goal-setting; in November, Merrill Cousin from the Portland Family Crisis Shelter; in December, a party for NOW's 20th anniversary; and in January we will have had Sally Sutton, Director of the Maine Civil Liberties Union and Family Planning Board member, to speak about reproductive rights and the parental consent referendum/bill.

Greater Farmington NOW

Our chapter continues with regular chapter meetings the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Faculty Dining Room at the UMF student center. At the February 4 meeting, Paula Aboud of the Maine Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance (MLGPA) will speak on the origins of the group and share with us what has been learned about organizing tactics, fundraising and coalition building. In March, the meeting will be moved back one week to fit in with Women's History Week. On March 11, a film, My Brilliant Career, will be shown followed by a discussion. ~~The location for the March meeting is Mabel Hastie Lounge in Ricker Hall at UMF.~~ "A is for April and Action" - the chapter is looking for an action to do for April, as yet undecided.

Everyone is invited to attend chapter meetings, members and interested non-members alike.

Happy New Year!!!

Greater Bangor NOW

Our chapter met on November 20 at UMO and JoAnne Dauphinee gave a presentation on some of Maine NOW's history. It was helpful to us all as many of us are novices to a NOW group! Ann Pooler organized a Take Back the Night march and approximately 150 people marched - an excellent turnout!

Our chapter also elected persons to function in certain roles: Co-coordinators are Karen Hartnagle and Pat Lissey; Consciousness Raising Committee to be headed by JoAnne Dauphinee; Newsletter Committee is JoAnne and Pat; Publicity Coordinators will be Amy Manuelle-Graham and Larry Kammerer; Secretary is Albertine Henderson; Membership Coordinator is Amy; and Treasurers are Chris Estrand and Pam Wallace (we expect big money this year!).

Our major project this spring will be a Holly Near concert that we are co-sponsoring with the UMO Women's Center. It will be April 24 at the Performing Arts Center at UMO - RESERVE THAT DATE!! We will need help with publicity to all parts of the state. Please contact Karen Hartnagle if you can help!

Our meetings will be the last Monday of the month at UMO in the Memorial Union at 7:00 PM - specific room to be announced. We will be making up flyers about our regular meetings to inform everyone of the "what, where and when" details.

ODDS AND ENDS

PINE CONE PRODUCTIONS, an all women's production company, is please to bring Janet Hood (formerly of Jade and Sarsaparilla) and Susan Farley in concert at 8:00 PM on Saturday, February 21. This dynamic duo will perform at the First Parish Unitarian Church, 425 Congress Street, Portland. Tickets are \$8.00 (general admission) and are available at: Walk-About, Entre Nous, Amadeus, Whole Grocer, MacBeans (Brunswick) and at the door starting at 7:00 PM. This is a benefit for the Women's Community Project. Refreshments served, handicap accessible, interpreted for the hearing impaired. For further information, call 772-2518.

THE BAGLADY PAPERS

by JoAnne Dauphinee

Dear MoneyBags,

As a candidate for the Maine Legislature I assure you that I think women are wonderful. I even married one and she thinks I'm neat. In fact, I think women are smarter than men. Looking forward to your endorsement.

Sincerely,
Advised Their Right

P.S. I have a niece who likes me and she's for the ERA!

Dear Advised,

We in Maine NOW PAC think legislative candidates are wonderful. Some are even neat. We are pleased for you that your wife and niece like you. Perhaps we could consider endorsing your niece, but I'm afraid you haven't given us quite enough information for Maine NOW PAC to endorse you.

Smarter than you think,
MoneyBags

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Dear MoneyBags,

I'm opposed to ERA, baby killing and queers. Otherwise I think we are of one mind. Though, I really see no sense in expanding rights or funding to help the oppressed or poor. Instead, we could mail each of them a bootstrap and autographed picture of President Reagan. What do you say? Looking forward to your endorsement.

Truly,
A.S. Sole

Dear A.S.,

Enclosed please find one shovel and a copy of Maine Christian Civic League newsletter. If you see me in Augusta, please stand downwind.

Stop looking,
MoneyBags

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Dear MoneyBags,

If we blow ourselves up with nukes, what difference do your issues make? You should reassess your priorities. Your money is better spent on candidates like myself.

Sincerely,
I. M. Liberal

Dear I.M.,

We are both dealing with the most explosive issues of our time. If you can keep us from blowing up, feminists will try to give more people reasons to be pleased with the alternatives. Perhaps you should consider expanding yourself beyond a single issue. Most lawmakers consider single issue people fanatic. While feminists enjoy a good fanatic, we fear you don't quite qualify for funds.

Maybe Next Time,
MoneyBags

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Dear MoneyBags,

I'm 100% for ERA. (Don't we already have that?) Ladies should have the abortion rights too, within limits of course! I believe deeply in human rights, but I'd have to see the gay rights bill before I could commit myself. If your figures are right on the AFDC stuff that would be terrible, but if we help too much won't poor people flock to Maine from Louisiana or Texas or other foreign places? I look forward to working with you in Augusta!

Best wishes,
Master Doubletalk

Dear Doub,

I support your campaign 100%, within limits of course! Though I believe you are committed to human rights, I'd have to see your vote on gay rights before I could commit Maine NOW PAC. I fear if we gave you a donation, candidates from all over the political spectrum would flock to old MoneyBags with all sorts of odd requests. I'm sure we'll see you in Augusta!

Keep in touch,
MoneyBags

P.S. Have we met? Your faces look familiar.

continued...

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BagLady, Continued...

Dear MoneyBags,

Enclosed is your questionnaire. I deeply respect your work for human rights for women, gays and all people. I am solidly convinced that there should be no government restrictions on a woman's choice to remain pregnant or to terminate her pregnancy. As for funding, I absolutely oppose punishing women who choose abortion by cutting off their access to health-care benefits! It is an affront to women's integrity and an abuse of men's power.

I agree with you that no matter the trappings and privileges of Maine's middle and upper classes, we must ultimately be measured by our collective response to Maine's most needy. "Ask not for whom the bell tolls..." and so on.

Maine NOW's work, over 15 years, has resulted in many positive changes for Maine's people. I would be honored by your endorsement, and any donation you may send would be greatly appreciated.

In struggle,
Ima Feminist

Dear Ima,

The check is enclosed.

For Justice and Equality,
MoneyBags

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Dear MoneyBags,

Please explain the Maine NOW PAC endorsement policy. Is it true that you always endorse the woman, even if the other candidate(s) is (are) better? Do you ever endorse Republicans??? I've heard rumors that your endorsements involve some kind of rituals involving a lake and priazzo? What's the scoop?

Just wondering,
R.U. Kinky

P.S. Where is your office and why don't you answer the phone?

Dear R.U.,

I can explain about the lake and the priazzo, the office and the phone. But first the answer to your questions about women and Republicans. No. Yes.

The Maine NOW PAC Endorsement Policy Explained...

The Maine NOW PAC (MNP) endorsement is based entirely on where candidates stand on the issues. That's the simple, bottom line of our policy. From there it gets more complicated. A candidate must give some signs of being pro-choice, pro-lesbian/gay rights, pro-ERA, and anti-racist. Otherwise, they are immediately eliminated from consideration for endorsement. If they survive the 4-basic-issues test (and many of them do not) then they enter the pool of candidates we consider for endorsement.

Each legislative session a variety of feminist issues are voted on, and some of them produce a rollcall if requested by a legislator. Only if a rollcall exists, do we have a record of how each lawmaker stands on any particular measure. This becomes a major factor upon which incumbents are judged. The depth of support or opposition, as indicated by bill sponsorship, personal conversations, floor speeches, committee work and so on, may also be noted. So incumbency can be an advantage or a disadvantage. A clear record of support has the edge over a non-incumbent's questionnaire answers. But, negative votes are worse than the I-Don't-Knows or I-Need-More-Information of first-time candidates.

Each election season we mail out questionnaires to all candidates for the House and the Senate. Incumbents' answers are compared to their voting records for consistency, clarification or additional information. A candidate need not answer the questionnaire to be endorsed, but MNP makes "blind endorsements" only in extremely rare circumstances, and we have never sent blind-endorsed candidates money. Therefore, first-time candidates are most often judged by their questionnaire answers. First-time candidates who fail to send in questionnaires are called for phone interviews. Reasonable attempts are made to reach them, then we compare all the information we have on all eligible candidates. We eliminate from endorsement consideration those candidates for whom we have insufficient information.

In most cases, one candidate is clearly more feminist than her/his opponent(s). When this is the case, and when that candidate passes the 4-issues test, endorsement is usual. Some races are much more difficult. These are closely scrutinized on a case by case basis. Sometimes candidates are called for clarification on the depth of their support or opposition on various issues. Occasionally, we refrain from endorsing in a race (or endorse both candidates) because both are equally bad or good on the issues - not the same perhaps, but "of equal value".

Even more difficult, in some ways, are candidates who are "confused" about an issue or issues. Mr. X says he is "absolutely pro-choice, except for 'reasonable restrictions'" (such as one or several of the anti-choice harassment bills). Or, Ms. Y says she believes strongly in human rights for all, except "maybe" employers should be able to fire lesbians and gaymen without cause. Mr. Z says "I guess I'm for ERA. Don't we already have that?"

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Greater Portland NOW will be a cosponsor with PAUSICA (Portlanders Against U.S. Intervention in Central America) in bringing members of COMADRES to Woodfords Congregational Church, Woodford Street in Portland, on March 23 at 7:30 PM. For more information call Annie Lunt, 926-3657.

MORE POLITICAL RUMINATIONS

by JoAnne Dauphinee, Maine NOW Legislative Wizard

Being a connoisseur of Maine politics I found 1986 a most enjoyable election year. Each election season I have a little better grasp of the possible, the predictable and the just plain bull. I don't mean to sound too cynical at the tender age of 36, but taking the long view (which lifelong activists are prone to do) I found much with which to amuse myself in '86. For me, the joy of watching the boys respond to a feminist gubernatorial candidate was positively gleeful on occasion. And the unfolding of Marge Clark's campaign was an unbeatable treasure!

We made out well on quantity of female victors, but more importantly, more candidates - female and male - identified as feminists and/or identified with the feminist agenda. And, though the rightwing poured thousands upon thousands of dollars into the pot, they had far fewer victories than we (Maine NOW PAC/MNP) once the votes were counted. What I really loved though, was that the feminist agenda was the focus of many a speech or debate question. And, most of those in the anti-feminist camp ranged from defensive to downright apologetic. Such fun!

OK. So the election's over and now it's time to see how it will all wash out in Augusta. Since we started observing legislative antics (in 1971), things have considerably improved. But, like a good news/bad news story, we still lack majorities on some very major issues. The lesbian/gay rights bill will face a lot of legislators with shaking knees, as well as the usual batch who think straight people need to hang on to superior legal advantages. Legislators are all over the place on choice. It looks as though a majority has grasped the injustice of date rape being somehow a lesser crime than stranger rape or spousal rape.

The big issue this session will be childcare. Better late than never, eh? You may recall this issue was overshadowed last session by an obsession with child abuse and neglect legislation. But if all goes well it should be spotlighted in the 113th. Lawmakers will gasp in disbelief at all the statistics and human interest stories revealing the appalling lack of childcare given the tremendous need. With luck, Maine's children will reap some benefits from the performance.

Frankly, I'm having just a little trouble firing up for the 113th. It's a combination of things I suppose. Lots of legislative groupies are positively excited to observe the dynamics of Democratic leadership and a Republican governor. Boys games (though not confined to boys). Ho hum. All that rubbing the right elbows, soothing the right egos, clever maneuvering. Things are even less often what they appear to be. Who will stumble, how publicly and what innocent issues will get caught in the crossfire? It's fun for a lot of people, but for every shafted feminist program, for every human right diminished or denied, I see the betrayed faces and hear the angry frustrated voices of the very real Maine people who were innocent and brave enough to believe in the system. An important part of the "game" is to not take your issues too seriously. (This makes legislators nervous.) But an important part of creating social change is making legislators nervous. (Only political cynics believe this. Political innocents are still dressing for success. Good grief.) (Being real is rough, but somebody's gotta do it.) So, dress wrong, don't play games, and I'll see you in Augusta.

What follows are a few tidbits about Maine NOW PAC and MICPAC (Maine Impact Coalition Political Action Committee), the input and impact of each on the '86 elections. I do believe there are a few radicals in the legislature! I'm just not sure whether there are more in the rightwing or more in the feminist frame of mind. In any event, the majority of legislators are on various parts of the middleground with a definite tilt towards the status quo.

I hope each of you will join Beth, Lucie, and others of us, as we nudge, cajole, persuade and pester lawmakers to consider issues in a feminist light.

The wind blows. The crap flows. I'd rather be demonstrating, but that's how it goes.
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*** All NOW endorsed incumbents won reelection in the House.

*** Of ten incumbents defeated in the House, all opposed lesbian/gay rights, only 1 was pro-choice although 3 others were "mixed", and 6 either opposed the ERA or didn't know where they stood on ERA. (2 of the 10 were opposed by NOW endorsed candidates.)

*** In races with no incumbent, we had 6 victories and 5 defeats.

*** There are 43 women in the 113th House (28.5%), an increase of 8 over the 112th.

*** There are 10 women in the Senate (the same number who served in the 112th).

*** Total of NOW endorsed candidates in Senate: 13.

*** MICPAC (Maine Impact Coalition Political Action Committee - anti-feminist right-wing conservative group) endorsed 10 Senate candidates, 5 won and 5 lost. They endorsed 16 House candidates of which 3 won.

*** MICPAC spent nearly \$135,000 on House and Senate races, dumping more than \$30,000 into Senate races. (Please note all dollar amounts are approximate.)

*** The only 2 incumbents unseated by MICPAC endorsed candidates opposed lesbian/gay rights, and no incumbent House member who supports lesbian/gay rights was defeated/all pro-lesbian/gay rights House members were re-elected.

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FIGHT THE PHONY CLINIC

The city of Portland has the dubious honor of being the location of a "phony clinic", a location with all the trappings of a family-planning-type clinic, but in fact a place where women seeking free pregnancy testing (their advertising lure) are subject to intense anti-abortion rhetoric. One Greater Portland NOW member has written the following.

"Five months ago, a friend of mine went into the Community Pregnancy Center, at 583 Forest Avenue, and lied to them. She told them that she was sixteen, that she had been raped by her father, and that she believed that she was pregnant. They gave her the free pregnancy test that they advertise.

"While she waited for her test results, they showed her a slideshow. It was produced by the Moral Majority, with the specific intent of persuading pregnant teenagers to forego abortion and have their babies. Older women are shown "The Silent Scream."

"After the show, my friend was interviewed by a "counselor." She told the counselor that she was a victim of incest. The counselor was supportive and helpful about the incest, but stressed that "it wasn't the baby's fault," that "even rapes produce beautiful children," and presented her with anti-abortion literature.

"Hundreds of women have been lured into the Community Pregnancy Center by the advertising of free pregnancy tests, only to be blitzed by fundamentalist films and pressured by anti-choice counselors. Particularly vulnerable are teenagers, who don't have their own money and who fear telling their parents of a possible pregnancy, and low income women. They are attracted by the ads promising the no-cost testing and confidentiality."

If you wish to inform the public and help stop the center, call Perry at 761-0941. The Greater Portland NOW chapter will be focusing on this phony clinic and what actions we might take as a chapter at its May 26 meeting.

IN MEMORY

On January 24, 1987, the Maine feminist community lost a valued member. Nancy Gentile, a founder and the first director of Spruce Run, the battered women's shelter in Bangor, was killed in a car accident. Her commitment to Spruce Run was only one dimension of her activism. She was involved in the fight against all aspects of domestic violence, from child abuse to incest and battering. She was also very active in the peace movement and traveled to Nicaragua last year as a Witness for Peace. At the time of her death she was director of Parents Anonymous of Maine. Lois Reckitt, formerly of South Portland, now Executive Vice President of National NOW, had worked in the early days with Nancy and has sent us her remembrance of Nancy.

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"I know that there would have been - eventually - a domestic violence movement in Maine without Nancy Gentile - but never so early, never so strong, never so clear in its feminist vision.

"Her skill and persistence made possible the passage of our domestic violence laws and of the first state allocation of money to victim services. The Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services was her vision and for a long time a central part of her reality. She made us remember, always, that services were a statewide need - and that Bangor was only the center of the state. Her dedication to women's safety and emotional well-being was tireless.

"All of us in Maine "politics" owe her a debt - her vision was that strong. And to the women of central Maine she and her sisters worked for, established, and gave Spruce Run. And that gift today knows no measure.

"On January 24, 1987, Nancy Gentile was killed in an automobile crash. She died instantly. Ironic, in a way, that she died as she lived - decisively. To me she was a private person. Others surely knew her better. But I know the contribution she made to the women and families of Maine."

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Donations in Nancy's memory, in gratitude and appreciation for her life of commitment to feminist ideals, may be made to the Maine Coalition for Family Crisis Services, Box 653, Bangor ME 04401.

We present a new feature in this issue...Marge Clark, former State Coordinator elected to represent District 70 in the Maine House of Representatives, has volunteered to write a column called Thoughts from the Legislature describing her perspective on the legislative process from the legislator's side of the fence. With a little luck and good timing this column will appear fairly regularly!!

Thoughts from the Legislature

by Representative Margaret Pruitt Clark (D, Dist. 70)

For many first term legislators, the first days seemed like a nightmare, filled with confusion. Sometimes it seems like we are back in grade school - pages and pages of forms to fill out, rules to learn, names to know, seats, lockers, committee rooms to find. The days seem to have a "hurry up and wait" quality about them. Orientation was inadequate to say the

continued...

Thoughts, continued...

least. Those of us who got seats next to veterans who were willing to help us out were grateful.

When I arrived for the orientation and swearing in, back in December, I felt less of a stranger than some of my colleagues. I had watched Speaker Martin and Clerk of the House, Ed Pert, read through a morning calendar in no time flat while I was lobbying for NOW and could actually keep up with them, most of the time. I had worked with Leadership in previous sessions and during my campaign. I knew many of the returning lobbyists. But I have had much to learn.

In the weeks since the election I have been invited by interest groups, both statewide and in Cumberland and Androscoggin County, to listen to their concerns. I have been to Selectmen's (sic) meetings in Durham and Lisbon Falls, to Town Council meetings in Brunswick and met with school board members in Auburn. I have held office hours and been to public gatherings. It has been exciting and tiring and great. I have met some wonderful, interesting people, all with their own legislative agendas.

I suspect that I have been less overwhelmed in those first weeks than some of my colleagues. But I must admit that being on this side of the rail is different. It is estimated that the Legislature will deal with over 2000 bills this session, sending them first to 19 Committees for hearings. My Committee, Human Resources, expects to hear 75-100 bills and we are responsible for hearings for not only the Commissioner of Human Resources, but also Corrections and Mental Health and Retardation, and appropriate sub-cabinet appointments in that area. In contrast, Maine Women's Lobby is working on about 35 bills and the Women's Legislative Agenda Coalition list includes only 18.

The legislative process often appears tedious, particularly from the outside. Bills appear on the Legislative Calendar, are then ordered printed and sent to committee. Committees will hold public hearings and then work sessions and then sign a report recommending passage or not. The bill then goes back to both houses. Each chamber must vote on a bill a minimum of two times. In other words, there are a number of times when citizens can have input on a bill.

I strongly urge all of you to find time to come to the Legislature. It will demystify the process and make it easier for you to make the next call to your legislator. Remember, you always have a right to explain your position on a bill to your elected official. Calls to legislators when a vote is coming up are appropriate. If you haven't already organized a phone tree in your area, do it today. Look at NOW's list of bills and make a commitment to being at one of the public hearings. You can usually testify but having people in the room is also important as a Committee Chair will frequently ask for a show of hands in support or opposition to a bill. In other words, it is important for all of us to be part of this process.

Now, at the end of January, I am even more convinced of something we as NOW activists have always known. IT IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL THAT YOU GET TO KNOW YOUR SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVE. Make a commitment to call them today. Give them a copy of the WLAC agenda and talk to them about other bills of particular interest to you. Ask them to keep you informed of the bill's progress. Invite them to a meeting to explain their position on items on the agenda. (Midcoast NOW and League of Women Voters have invited the entire Knox County delegation to a public forum.) Don't forget to thank them for votes you appreciated.

I believe that we can bring about social change through education and the legislative process. Feminists within and without the legislature have done it for years. We have made progress and we can make more. Your help is important. Call your legislator today!

HUBER FOR GOVERNOR, REVISITED

by Christine Torraca, Leader of Maine NOW PAC

In early September of last year, I held a press conference in Portland to announce Maine NOW PAC's endorsement of Sherry Huber, Independent candidate for Governor of Maine. I was proud to speak for our organization and for myself that day. As the weeks passed, moving us closer to Election Day, my belief in the correctness of our endorsement was strengthened at the same time that my respect and admiration for Sherry Huber the candidate and the person, grew. But many folks didn't see it that way. Members of Maine NOW leadership heard from many individuals (both NOW members and others) who questioned the wisdom of our decision - not only in terms of the realities of a 4-candidate race, but also on the basis of Huber's positions (or perceived positions) on the issues.

Informal post-election discussions I have had with Maine NOW PAC decision makers indicates we agree that given the same choices and knowing the outcome, we would do the same thing today that we did last fall. Maine NOW PAC endorsements are simply another piece of information for folks to use when they make their decisions about their voting choices. We do not "tell people how to vote" nor do we want to. We believe that intelligent individuals gather information from a variety of sources and then make their decision. Given that, our endorsement of Sherry Huber was telling people that she was the feminist candidate, period. Her positions on reproductive issues, economic issues, education, and human rights including lesbian/gay civil rights, among others, were consistent with a feminist viewpoint and were superior to those of the other candidates.

continued...

Huber, continued...

Having said that I feel a need to respond specifically to the objections that I heard in the weeks prior to the election. I am speaking for myself at this point, not as the Leader of the Maine NOW PAC. I heard three distinct things being said. First, that Sherry Huber couldn't win, so we should vote for the Democratic candidate. Second, that she used to be a Republican, "I can't possibly vote for a Republican, so I have to vote for the Democratic candidate." Third, I heard a number of people questioning her commitment to abortion rights and funding and questioning the basis for her support of lesbian/gay rights.

In response to those of you who fall into the first category: It is entirely possible that Huber might never have won the election, no matter what. But if everyone who voted for Jim Tierney because they thought he could win, while in their hearts believed that Huber was the better candidate, had voted for her, a much stronger message could have been sent to the Democratic party for them to get their act together to present strong, not wimpy, pro-choice candidates and strong, not wimpy, pro-lesbian/gay rights candidates. (Tierney's position on lesbian/gay rights is laughable at best, and should be a source of shame for all feminists who voted for him (no matter their sexual preference).

For folks who fall into the second category: One sentence: If party labels are all it takes to convince you to compromise your feminist principles, I suggest you take a good look at where your loyalties lie.

For those of you who belong in the third group: I hesitate to write this, but I must. Huber stated her positions time and again, on abortion and lesbian/gay rights. She clearly went out on a limb to make it clear to all who wanted to know, where she stood on these positions. To doubt the sincerity of this woman's statements, and then vote for a man whose positions on these key issues are considerably less than feminist and which contribute to the sexism and homophobia we experience daily, strikes me as simple misogyny, as internalized woman-hating. To distrust a woman's word and place one's trust in the hands of a known sexist is a dangerous practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to place my reactions before you. If you have thoughts on the past election or a response to my response I encourage you to write to me, Maine NOW Times, PO Box 4012, Sta A, Portland ME 04101.

BE A SUSTAINER

by Christine Torraca

SUSTAIN: 1: to give support or relief to; 2: to supply with sustenance, nourish.

SUSTAINING: 1b: aiding in the support of an organization through a special fee.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1976.

Last Fall, we started our Maine NOW Sustainer Program. To describe it briefly, we are asking our members and supporters to make a pledge of \$5, \$10, \$15 or more per month. With our new credit card capability, we can either charge that amount to your credit card (MasterCard or VISA) every month, or send you a reminder if you prefer to contribute by check. Many of you have been solicited by other progressive organizations to contribute by this sustaining method (even by National NOW). It is a method of fundraising and supporting an organization that provides a very stable income on a regular basis. You can, of course, cancel your credit card contributions at any time by contacting us (preferably in writing) and letting us know your wishes.

In return for becoming a **Maine NOW Sustainer** you will receive a mailing from Maine NOW leadership every month on a topic or issue of current interest. Nothing dramatic, mind you, but some news of particular interest to feminists. You will also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are contributing in a very concrete fashion to the continuation of Maine NOW's work.

We have had a good response so far. To date, 13 individuals are pledging a total of \$130 per month to support Maine NOW and Maine NOW PAC. We invite you to join this group of women and men who are willing and able to make a monthly financial contribution to allow us to continue our work at the chapter and state levels. Become a **Maine NOW Sustainer**. It will do us all good.

YES, I WANT TO BE A MAINE NOW SUSTAINER

Mail the completed form to NOW, PO Box 4012, Portland ME 04101.

Please begin sending me a monthly statement for the amount indicated below, or charge my VISA or MasterCard every month (complete the lower half of this form).

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$15 ___ \$20 ___ \$???

Please check one of the following:



___ I want ALL of my contribution to support MAINE NOW and its activities.

___ I want ALL of my contribution to support MAINE NOW PAC (Political Action Committee) and its activities.

___ I want my contribution to be SPLIT EVENLY between MAINE NOW and MAINE NOW PAC.

If you do not check any of the above, your contribution will be split as in the third option.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard		<input type="checkbox"/> VISA		Amount \$ _____
Credit card number: <input type="text"/>				Bank number: <input type="text"/>
Credit card valid through: <input type="text"/>				(Four digits above your name. MasterCard only.)
Signature _____				

STATE AND CHAPTER CONTACTS:

Beth Edmonds 9 Guptill Ave. Freeport 04032	State Coordinator 865-3869	Karin Sargent PO Box 1123 Kennebunk 04043	York County 985-6206
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Pam Prodan Star Route Dryden 04225	Secretary	Kennebec Valley NOW PO Box 615 Augusta 04330	293-2163
		Lucy Witt PO Box 475 Bar Harbor 04601	Mt. Desert 288-3105
JoAnne Dauphinee 87 Sunset Strip Brewer 04412	Legis. Coord. 989-3306	Greater Bangor NOW PO Box 8026 Bangor 04401	947-7999
Annie Lunt P.O. Box 4012 Sta. A Portland 04101	Greater Portland 926-3657	Lucie Bauer P.O. Box 522 Rockland 04841	Mid-Coast NOW 354-2241

JOIN NOW, N O W

Membership Form / Contribution Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Chapter: _____

(see above for list)

To become a member: To contribute:
dues: _____ \$35.00 full membership \$ _____ to Maine NOW
_____ \$15.00 - 34.00 sliding scale \$ _____ to Maine NOW PAC
based on your ability to pay.

Mail To: Maine NOW, PO Box 4012, Sta A, Portland ME 04101

Maine NOW
P. O. Box 4012, Sta. A
Portland, ME 04101

NON-PROFIT ORG.
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ANN SCHONBERGER
40 GARLAND ST
BANGOR, ME 04401